WHAT'S WRONG WITH PUBLISHERS?, By Burton Rascoe

The Saturday Review of Literature

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"FOR US THE LIVING"
By Bruce Lancaster
Reviewed by Allan Nevins

"SERGEANT LAMB'S AMERICA"
By Robert Graves
Reviewed by Stephen Vincent Benét

"AP: THE STORY OF NEWS"
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"ARTISTS SAY THE SILLIEST THINGS"
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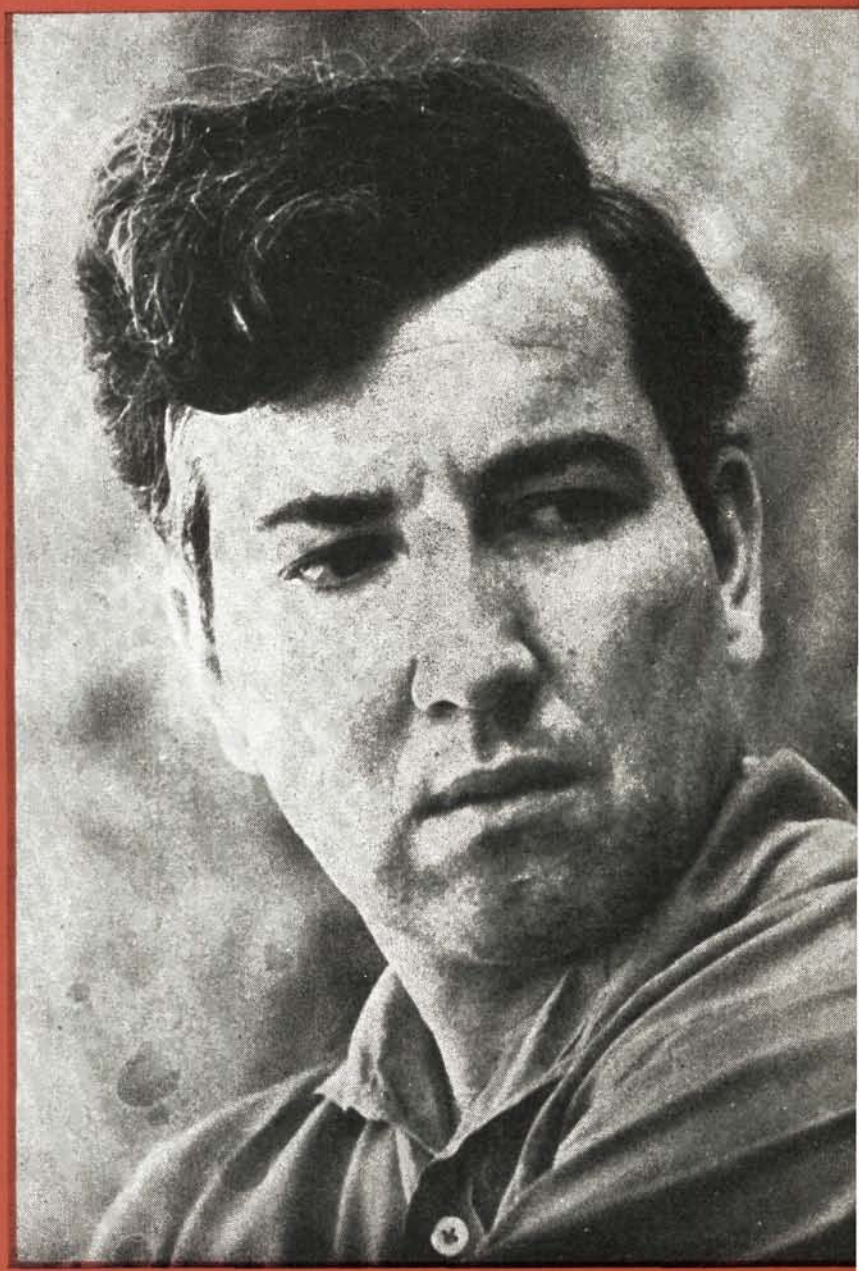

ROBERT GRAVES, author of "Sergeant Lamb's America"
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The Saturday Review of Literature

What's Wrong with Publishers!

BURTON RASCOE

Several weeks ago, The Saturday Review *published the first of a number of articles in a "What's Wrong" series with a reverie by Bennett Cerf on authors. This week the* SRL *drops the other shoe in the following piece by Mr. Rascoe. As previously stated in an editorial note, the editors take no sides in this polite free-for-all.*

THERE would be no point in my writing this article if I were just going to play patty-cake with the boys. So, Theophilus, my meat-axe and sledge-hammer, please.

Publishers are as dependent upon authors and the authors' annual crop of books as Mr. Campbell is dependent upon the farmers and their annual crop of beans. You never hear of Mr. Campbell's going around bragging that he could run his canned beans business even if there weren't any farmers or any beans, or, *particularly,* if there weren't any farmers or any beans. But yet, in a very similar case, publishers talk and act that way about their source of supply, their principal means of livelihood, their reason for existence.

I am sure that Mr. Campbell doesn't constantly argue that he loses money on every can of beans he sells. He must give people credit for having a *little* sense. But I have known publishers to show authors "mathematically" how they lose money on practically every title they bring out. This is done to get the author into a weepingly sympathetic mood toward the woes of the publisher, in order to put over on the author what has frequently turned out to be a contract whose terms are so inequitable and unethical, that they would turn the stomach of a professional card-sharper.

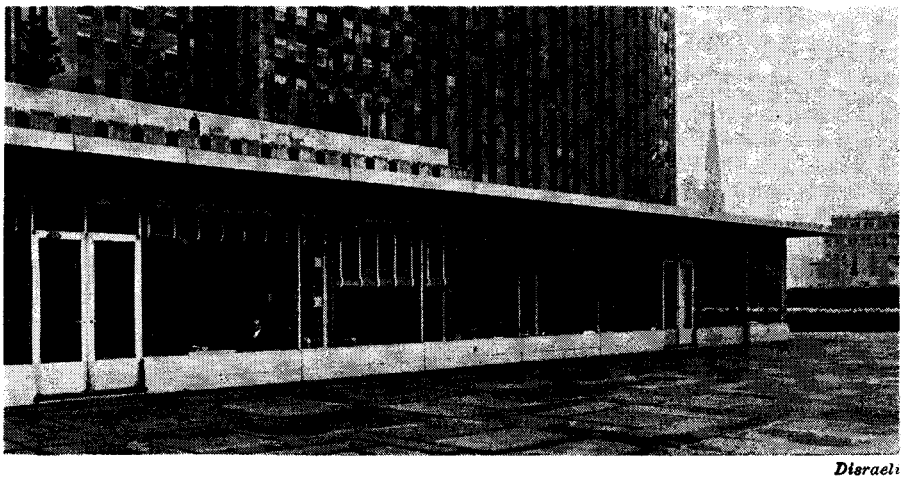
The author signs the contract, perhaps for two years' exacting, creative work, out of which the publisher fully expects to make a good piece of change, even if only out of the remainders he sells in bulk to a remainder dealer.

How is it, you ask, that so many publishers can live so well, prosper so obviously, while so many authors, on the products of whose brains the publishers depend—(except those authors who make their big money writing for the slick paper magazines or for the stage and/or movies)—are usually a grubby, down-at-the-heel lot, perennially only two jumps ahead of the sheriff or (and, here, even extremely talented and conscientious ones) feeling themselves lucky to get a job on the Writer's Project of W.P.A.; or else they are pulling all the wires they can to get a Guggenheim or Carnegie Foundation Fellowship?

The explanation is easy.

First, authors in general are saps about money, saps about contracts, saps about the true value (to others) of what their brains produce; and so, they are easy pickings for publishers, whose minds work along entirely different channels from those of the minds of authors. Publishers consider they have done a good day's work when they have out-smarted an author who is vague about addition and subtraction in a business arrangement whereby the author is to produce the product to be sold and the publisher expects to profit by it. Parenthetically, it might be stated that authors, in general, are such saps about money and contracts that they are often a great disappointment to a publisher, because they haven't any more bargaining sense than to accept, without any argument at all, any kind of contract the publisher first offers them. When an author does this, he leaves the publisher suffering from a sense of frustration. He feels like a Chamber of Commerce dues-payer who has been practising an after-dinner speech before his wife and before the mirror for a week and then isn't called upon by the toastmaster.

I have examined a contract for a symposium, in which contract, the entire limited edition of 365 copies, at $6 a copy, was exempted from royalty, and the first 3000 copies of the regular trade edition, at $2.50 a copy, were also exempted from royalty. In this contract, there was a $750 advance to the author-editor; but out of this amount, he was to pay each of the 50-odd contributors (and he actually paid out $1,250, *i.e.,* $500 additional cash out of his own pocket.) Finally, the royalty rate on all copies sold, above the 3365 copies exempted from royalty, was only a flat ten per cent. More than 8,200 copies of the regular trade edition were sold, in addition to all 365 of the limited edition, according to the author's first royalty statement. On the royalty statement were numerous publisher's charges, such as the use of the publisher's telephone by the author-editor for calls necessary in the work of editing the book, telegraphic charges, and proof-reading charges—all amounting to $178. The gross to the publisher, even on forty and fifty per cent discounts (and some of the discounts could have been only twenty-five per cent, to libraries, and thirty-three and



Disraeli

Publishers, says Mr. Rascoe, pay too much attention to the appearances and locations of their offices.

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a third per cent to some dealers)—was about $13,395, of which about $9,000 was clear profit. The royalty statement (the first and only one the author ever received) showed that the author-editor, for his six months' work of writing and editing, *owed the publisher* seventy-eight cents! And moreover, the author-editor was $500 out of pocket in paying for contributions!

I have known of other instances where publishers have inserted into contracts for novels a clause giving the publisher seventy-five per cent of the gross proceeds of the sale of motion picture rights and only twenty-five per cent to the author, even if the publisher should have nothing whatever to do with the negotiation or consummation of the sale of the motion picture rights. In one case, where the motion picture rights were sold, through a Hollywood agent, for $20,000, this meant that the publisher got $15,000 cash out of the product of the novelist's brain plus his profit on the novel; while the author got $5,000, less the agent's commission of ten per cent, or only $4,500, plus his niggardly book royalty.

I have known instances where publishers have sold the "remainders" to a dealer *even before they had signed* a contract with an author for a book. Thus to sell the "remainders" of an unwritten book, of course, may underwrite the publisher's costs and insure him against loss, even if there is only a small retail sale of the book; but the practice is nevertheless a gyp to the author, inasmuch as the publisher may be under no necessity to make even the "reasonable" effort spoken of in the contracts to push the sale of the book in the retail trade, because he may already have made money out of it as a "remainder" and the author is left holding the bag. Moreover, the publisher can make his "remainder" printing as large as the traffic will bear; and the author gets no royalty on "remainders."

I have bought books of my own and have had books of mine presented to me for my autograph in cities like Dallas, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Los Angeles and Sacramento, in reprint editions I never knew existed. Some of the abuses of the reprint racket have been corrected by the Fair Trade Agreement; but, once, in a drug store, three years ago, on Lexington Avenue in New York City, I saw a book by a famous author offered for sale in a "reprint" edition for $1.89, which I knew (from *Publishers' Weekly*) *had not yet been released for sale* in the regular trade edition to be sold at $4 by the regular booksellers.

Publishers argue that through the reprint trade they are developing a whole new regiment of book-buyers, exploiting an entirely new market, getting people into the habit of buying books who never bought books before. They argue that once you sell a book in a reprint at eighty-nine cents, fifty-nine cents, or thirty-nine cents to a reader who has never entered a bookstore or bought any reading matter except magazines and newspapers hitherto, you have snared a potential book-buyer, who, thereafter, will be going into bookstores and buying $2.50, $3, $4 and even $5 books in the regular trade editions.

This argument sounds like a lot of hooey to me. It seems to me that, in persuading a man to buy a book for thirty-nine cents who wouldn't buy one if it cost $3, instead of making a potential $3 book-buyer out of him, you have merely snared a potential book-buyer who thinks that every new book should sell for no more than thirty-nine cents a copy and who thinks that the regular retail booksellers are thieves and robbers for charging $3 for *any* book.

And besides, I see no reason in the world why contemporary authors should sweat their brains out writing books which publishers can sell principally as "reprints" on a royalty rate to the author of only one-quarter of a cent to five cents a copy, or no royalty at all, just to develop a future generation of book-buyers.

If the publishers were also taking a loss for this allegedly cultural and economic endeavor in the interest of developing a much wider book-buying market in the future, there might be some sense in their argument; but they are waxing fat on profits in the reprint business at the expense not only of the author but also at the expense of the retailer bookseller who must sell current books at the publisher's catalogue list price, and who has to pay for these books at the publisher's regular discount from that price.

Around the corner from this regular bookseller, the drug-store may be selling for $1.89 the very same book the bookseller has in a stock at a cost to him of $2.40 a copy, and which he is expected to sell for $4.

Because people aren't going to pay $4 for something they can buy for $1.89, the bookseller has to take a loss by cutting his price to meet the competition around the corner, or, if he has taken some copies of the book on consignment, he returns the book to the publisher who thereupon deducts from the author's next royalty statement the amount covering these returns.

Publishers are prone to spring upon innocent and unsuspecting authors a royalty contract based upon the whole-

(*Continued on page* 14)

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Soldier with Burgoyne

SERGEANT LAMB'S AMERICA. By Robert Graves. New York: Random House, Inc. 1940. 380 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

IN his new novel of the Revolution, Robert Graves turns for the first time to an American scene, and tries to show it through the eyes of a representative British soldier who marched and fought with Burgoyne. The real Sergeant Lamb existed and his soldier's letter, reproduced after the title-page, is that of an honest and manly spirit. The Sergeant Lamb of the novel, who tells his memoir in the first person, is a likeable and forthright fellow, proud of his coat, with a keen professional eye for the details of soldiering, a set of honest British prejudices, and an Irish adaptability which stands him in good stead through his various adventures. The only trouble with the book is that, in reproducing so closely the style and matter of an eighteenth century memoir, Mr. Graves has sometimes forgotten that he is writing a novel.

He starts out well enough with Roger Lamb's boyhood in Dublin and his first experiences as a soldier in the Ninth Foot. We are introduced to some interesting characters—we begin to get a thread of plot. Then Sergeant Lamb embarks for Quebec and no sooner is he well afloat than we get sixty-two pages of "a short historical survey of the origins of the American War." It is interesting in itself, it will give Americans who have been brought up on the more flag-waving schoolbooks pause for thought, but it sticks like a very large crumb in the throat of the actual story. And it happens again in Chapter XII and happens again later on. Mr. Graves is full of authentic and interesting detail—he is able to give a very fair picture of what an honest and intelligent British soldier thought about the whole business—but he has somehow failed to convey excitement to his narrative. Put beside a book like "Guns of Burgoyne," "Sergeant Lamb's America" seems painfully pedestrian. And put beside a memoir like the memoirs of Sergeant Bourgogne, it lacks the queer reality that old soldiers can sometimes give, even when they ramble. One feels that one is reading source-material out of which a novel could be made, not the novel itself.

It is a pity, for parts of the story are excellent. The beginning gives us a good deal of insight into the ways and habits of an eighteenth century regiment—Sergeant Lamb's adventures in the woods are well told—the campaign itself is seen with a professional eye. But the slight fictional plot never really gets going—and yet, supposedly, we are reading historical fiction. The story ends just after Saratoga and we are promised a sequel. Perhaps in that, Mr. Graves will be able to fuse his story and his historical material together in a way that he has not been able to do in "Sergeant Lamb's America." Let us hope—for Sergeant Lamb is an honest and candid foe and one would like to hear more of what he felt and did, if he'd only tell it more like a human being and less, at times, like a rather diffuse historical treatise.

Mural study by Stephen J. Belaski

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

HOW SHORT STORIES END

Here are the closing lines of ten well-known short stories. How many of them do you recognize? Allow 5 points for each story you can name, and another 5 if you can also recall the name of its author. A score of 50 is par, 60 is good, 70 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 12.

1.

But they say that whenever the devil comes near Marshfield, even now, he gives it a wide berth. And he hasn't been seen in the state of New Hampshire from that day to this. I'm not talking about Massachusetts or Vermont.

2.

The magazine was Mrs. Brady's favorite. Its stories were true stories, taken from life (so the editor said); and to Mrs. Brady they were live, vivid threads in the dull, drab pattern of her night.

3.

"DEAREST WALTER, WITH HARD-BOILED EGG."

4.

It's an honest town once more, and the man will have to rise early that catches it napping again.

5.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! Why, mine was paste. It was worth at the very most five hundred francs!"

6.

He confronted the maid upon the threshold with something like a smile.
"You had better go for the police," said he: "I have killed your master."

7.

"Yus, yus,"—with a palsied nodding,—"I'm a-goin' to 'ave mutes: I can do it respectable, thank Gawd!"
"And the plooms?"
"Ay, yus, and the plooms too. They ain't sich a great expense, after all."

8.

Jim was a sucker to leave a new beginner have his gun, let alone a half-wit. It probably served Jim right, what he got. But still we miss him around here. He certainly was a card!
Comb it wet or dry?

9.

The door swung open. In the doorway stood a negro child, barefooted and naked except for a single garment, eyeing them with serious, rolling eyes—and, with all the strength of his two puny arms, proudly but solemnly tolling a small, rusty cow-bell he had found in the cowyard.

10.

The knocking ceased suddenly, although the echoes of it were still in the house. He heard the chair drawn back, and the door opened. A cold wind rushed up the staircase, and a long loud wail of disappointment and misery from his wife gave him courage to run down to her side, and then to the gate beyond. The street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road.

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The Youth of Abe Lincoln

FOR US THE LIVING. By Bruce Lancaster. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co. 1940. 556 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

IN "Guns of Burgoyne" Mr. Lancaster brought the men and scenes of the Saratoga campaign vividly before his readers, and told a swift, full-blooded, and exciting story. Now he turns to the West and to the adolescence of Abraham Lincoln for his theme. The first half of the novel has its setting in southern Indiana—that backwoods Indiana of hardship, toil, and crudity that Edward Eggleston described in "Roxy"; the second half is placed in the more familiar New Salem. Unlike Mr. Lancaster's previous book, this is a novel of character and not of adventure. Seen through the eyes of a large and shifting body of associates, but chiefly through his staunch friend Hugh Brace, young Abe's body and mind grow up into the promise of surpassing strength and stature. At first he is presented as a child of the tangled forest, the stump-sown field, the dirty, verminous log-cabin; then books reach him, while he absorbs the ideas sown in political stump-speeches, camp-meeting sermons, the talk of country lawyers, and the rough exchanges of the New Salem tavern. Historically, we know very little of the early adolescence of Lincoln. Mr. Lancaster can give his imagination full play in building on the slender stock of proved facts, and he does so. The result is a picture of frontier life which, though not without inaccuracies and omissions, is clear, well-colored, and convincing; and a portrait of the gangling, groping young rail-splitter, surveyor, and Indian-fighter which has vitality and strength.

The author justly sees Lincoln imbibing from his Western frontier environment two great ideals, democracy and nationalism; and to no inconsiderable degree he enables the reader to comprehend just how the wide prairies, the busy rivers, the hustling, aggressive, sociable pioneer settlements of Indiana and Illinois, fostered these ideals. Lincoln was part of a world which, with all its faults, recognized strength and worth as the only title-deeds to eminence, and which, its people drawn from every State of the East and half the nations of Europe, believed fervently, almost mystically, in the Union. One of Mr. Lancaster's best scenes shows young Abe in 1828 philosophizing to his friend Hugh over the contest of Adams, Clay, and Jackson for the presidency. Jackson is too quarrelsome to suit him: "like a she-bear with cubs." Adams is a scholar—but he has one great deficiency.

> Been in France and England a heap of times. Been 'cross the ocean more times than I been 'cross the Ohio. But he ain't never been furrer west nor Washington. He seed them rivers in France an' England, but he ain't never seed the Ohio or the Mississip. Ain't never been in a clearin' in his life. He don't know nothin' 'bout *America* 'cep' a couple or three cities back thar on the coast. Now, he's sound 'bout slaves, sound 'bout keepin' the country together. But what's he know 'bout the folks that lives west of Washin'ton?

His choice is Clay. "Now I figger thet this here Clay can kinda pull the country together." Some expressions in this scene, which is too long to quote in full, sound dubious, but in essence. Lincoln's monologue rings quite true. It is the primary merit of Mr. Lancaster's book that he offers a vivid fictional explanation—a hypothetical reconstruction as good as that of any other writer—of the mode in which Lincoln became confirmed in his democracy and his nationalism.

In this long book the early scenes drag somewhat. There are sections in which the story is altogether too completely that of Hugh Brace, and too little that of Lincoln. A few slips in natural history indicate that Mr. Lancaster has no close first-hand acquaintance with Western forests and prairies. But the book gains in pace and interest as the story moves on to New Salem; and the familiar figures of that community—Mentor Graham, Bowling Green, the Herndons, Denton Offutt, Clary, and others—are ably sketched. The Black Hawk War is presented with all the vigor the author showed in writing of the Revolution. From beginning to end the book shows imaginative power and a keen grasp of human nature; and those who like historical portraiture in fiction may be assured that this volume is in its way quite as good as Eggleston's sketch of Attorney Lincoln in "The Graysons," or as Mrs. Morrow's depiction of the Lincoln of Civil War times.

From the end-papers of "For Us the Living"

The SRL in Literary History

FIVE YEARS AGO: (Nov. 2)
Among the books of the week were "Old Jules," by Mari Sandoz; "From the Kingdom of Necessity," by Isidor Schneider; "Lord of Creations," by Frederick Lewis Allen; and "The Land of the Free," by Herbert Agar. In reviewing "Old Jules," Bernard DeVoto gives high praise to this *Atlantic Monthly* prize, and calls it "a magnificent job . . . there is a good deal of America in 'Old Jules.'"

TEN YEARS AGO: (Nov. 1)
J. B. Priestley, in "A Letter From England" writes of the new novel by Somerset Maugham, "Cakes and Ale, or The Skeleton in the Cupboard," which is creating a stir in English literary circles.

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO: (Nov. 1)
The conductor of The Bowling Green, Christopher Morley, is in London. "Sunsets in London," writes Mr. Morley, "like port wine, are of two kinds: the *tawny* and the *ruby* . . . and in the building where Lamb was born there is a broken window-pane, which report ascribes, to some humorist with a pea-shooter who besieged Sinclair Lewis there when Lewis was working on 'Martin Arrowsmith.' We visited All Hallows Barking, and admired the Thames-side pubs and warehouses of Wapping and Stepney . . . and we poked about the old docks where Conrad used to tie up." L. G.

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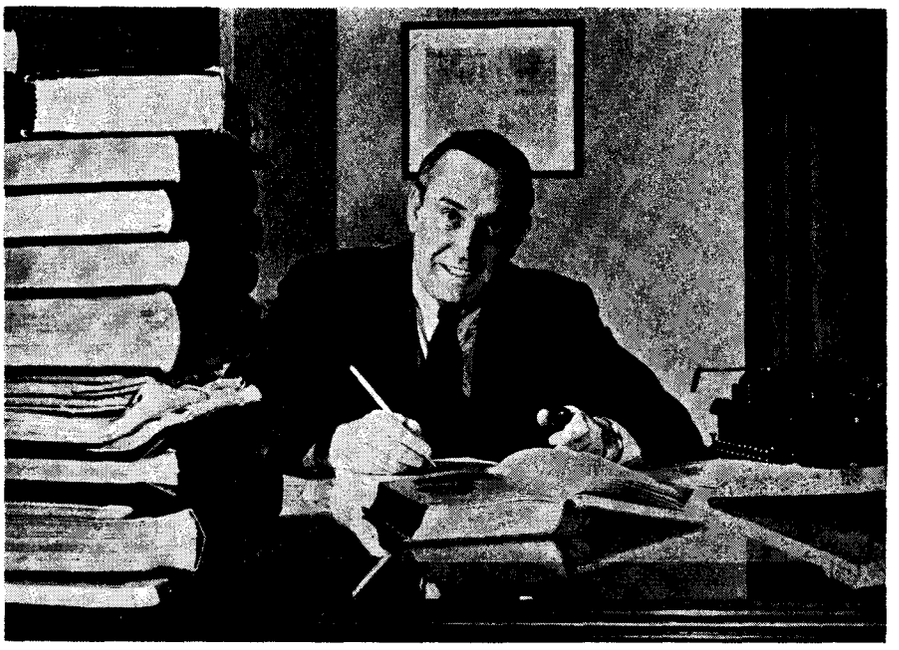
Story Behind A News Service

AP: THE STORY OF NEWS. By Oliver Gramling. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1940. 506 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by
OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD



Oliver Gramling, author of "AP: The Story of News," has written a story which the layman will read with many a thrill.

THE subtitle of this book is misleading. It is not a general account of the rise of newsgathering in America, although it has a brief historical introduction. It is rather a popular account of the founding and growth of the Associated Press, illustrated by many stories of important news "beats," of the devotion, resourcefulness, and bravery of the newspapermen who have made the service what it is. If there is little new in the book, and if it is rather discursive, it is none the less a record which the layman will read with many a thrill. For certainly, whatever its faults, the Associated Press has been extraordinarily successful in enlisting an enthusiasm and fidelity, and a readiness to give their lives if need be, of innumerable men during its long and colorful career.

The romance of newsgathering is here set forth and the inwardness of certain important news episodes. One of the most touching narratives is the account of the mortal wounding at the front and the death of Edward Neil in reporting the revolution in Spain. While he actually lost his life in the service, scores and scores have similarly risked theirs knowing full well that their heroism would not be known or recognized outside of "the service." Medals, titles, and uniforms have been for others. Their pay has usually been small and they have been subject to severe criticism if their rivals got ahead of them. Still they have to an extraordinary degree upheld the integrity of newsgathering. Of course they could not have been enlisted by the Associated Press were it not for the fascination of the career and its never-ceasing excitement.

To be behind the scenes or close to all the great drama of the world, to be in close touch with the greatest figures in the making of history —these have been some of the lures that have made it possible for the Associated Press to recruit the men whose names appear on Mr. Gramling's pages, names familiar to all of us who have been in the newspaper "game," but not sufficiently known by any means to the general public. Indeed it is only in the last few years that the Associated Press has allowed its men to sign their articles. When I was a member of its board of directors that was considered bad form. It was held that anonymity was essential for the best operation of the service.

To me the disappointment of this book is that it does not deal with the innate weaknesses of the Associated Press. Mr. Gramling stresses the cooperative character of the organization. Indeed he constantly refers to it as "the coöperative," yet that feature of it has been curiously enough one of its weaknesses, as well as one of its distinguishing attributes. There is a great need for a book to deal with this phase of newsgathering. Actually for years the United Press, a privately-owned, purely money-making affair, was far more liberal than its coöperative rival.

The difficulty with the Associated Press has been that its management could not rise above the level of its membership. Also, its advance has been limited by the caliber of the men at its head. Mr. Gramling dedicates his book to Frank B. Noyes, who was for thirty-eight years the president of the A.P. Mr. Noyes brought a devotion to the service unsurpassed by any man in the field. He was modest and unselfish to a degree and deliberately kept himself in the background, notably in the discussion of public affairs, in order that he should in nowise embarrass the organization of which he was the head. None the less, with all his admirable qualities, Mr. Noyes often lacked vision, breadth of view, and a realization that there were many groups in our national life to whose interest and welfare the Associated Press was often indifferent. The publisher of an extremely prosperous and extremely dull newspaper, his lines were early fixed. If the news stream of the Associated Press cannot rise higher than its source, the width and breadth of that stream is bound to be regulated by the men who direct it. This is the great problem of the future before the Associated Press.

Mr. Gramling deals approvingly with the lowering of the standards of the Associated Press as set by Melville Stone when the present General Manager, Kent Cooper, took hold. The latter's idea was to broaden the service by making it more closely reflect the "human interest" side of American life. There is need for that, but too often this has meant the carrying of trivial stories, amusing incidents, odd happenings, when great and vital situations were left uncovered, such as the horrible ill-treatment of the Negro after the last war, the plight of the sharecroppers, the migrant workers, etc., etc. Of course a news service cannot take sides, cannot crusade, cannot be a reforming organization, but it can and should reflect situations from which millions of Americans suffer. Because it does not do so the A.P. is considered, unjustly, by great multitudes to be a purely capitalistic class organization.

All of this does not appear in Mr. Gramling's book which is deliberately a record of outstanding news happenings and reporters. It was worth doing and it should have a wide circulation.

Oswald Garrison Villard was a member of the Associated Press for the New York Evening Post *from 1898 until 1918, and for two years a member of its Board of Directors.*

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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PRESIDENTIAL POLL

THE *Saturday Review* has polled many of the nation's leading authors and critics, as represented by membership in P.E.N., on their presidential preferences in the election to be held next Tuesday. The results show a slight margin for President Roosevelt:

Franklin D. Roosevelt	48%
Wendell L. Willkie	41%
Undecided or not voting	06%
Norman Thomas	05%
Earl Browder	00%

It should be stressed that these percentages are based upon straw ballots returned by 145 members of P.E.N. out of a total membership of 288. For this reason, the figures do not necessarily indicate that the P.E.N., as an organization, is in favor of the President's re-election. It may be concluded, however, that a fair cross-section of this writers' group is so inclined.

With few exceptions, authors replying to this poll have permitted their names to be made public in connection with the balloting. Among those who have stated they will vote for President Roosevelt are Edna Ferber, Joseph Wood Krutch, MacKinlay Kantor, Waldo Frank, Herbert Agar, Ludwig Lewisohn, Margaret Armstrong, Quincy Howe, Oliver LaFarge, John Chamberlain, Emil Lengyel, Irwin Shaw, Milton L. Cross, Robert E. Sherwood, Hendrik Willem van Loon, Irwin Edman, Max Ascoli, Harry Hansen, William Soskin, Frederic G. Melcher, Allan Nevins, Fletcher Pratt, Marc Connelly, Hervey Allen, William Pepperell Montague, Charles Poore, R. L. Duffus, and Robert van Gelder.

Among the authors and critics favoring Mr. Willkie are Gertrude Atherton, James Truslow Adams, Margaret Culkin Banning, Rose Wilder Lane, Josephine Lawrence, Christopher LaFarge, Arthur Guiterman, Will Irwin, Nicholas Roosevelt, Neil MacNeil, William Allen White, Sophie Kerr, Wallace Irwin, Phil Stong, Gladys Hasty Carroll, John Erskine, John Bakeless, Clare Boothe, Herbert Gorman, Frederick Lewis Allen, John Farrar, J. Donald Adams, and Frank Case.

Only two questions were asked on *The Saturday Review's* ballot: "For whom will you vote on November 5, 1940"; and "For whom did you vote in 1936." A tally of responses to the second question revealed that the President had a more substantial margin among the same voters in 1936:

Franklin D. Roosevelt	64%
Alfred M. Landon	28%
Norman Thomas	04%
Not voting	04%
*Earl Browder**	00%

Among those who voted for Mr. Roosevelt in 1936 but who will support the Republican candidate next Tuesday are Frank Case, Frederick Lewis Allen, Josephine Lawrence, Clayton Hamilton, Neil MacNeil, Phil Stong, and John Erskine.

This last question was included because *The Saturday Review* felt that a trend, if any, would perhaps be of significance. The Presidential preferences of these writers can not accurately be construed as the majority voice of *all* American writers, since only those writers holding membership in P.E.N. were polled. But among those authors who were polled the extent of the shift of their vote may be of significance, even if evaluated on the basis of the comparatively small number—as straw polls go—of votes involved. As far as this group of authors and critics is concerned, the election has tightened up; there is no clear-cut majority as there was in 1936.

THE *Saturday Review* is reluctant to read any meanings into the results of the poll, either as to the meaning of the present figures, or as to the extent of a trend. But it would seem that the poll bears out, and this is perhaps reflected in the number, however small, of those who are still "undecided," that this is one election whose issues are so ramified, so contingent upon factors over which both candidates may have no control, that the American people may find it difficult to go to the polls and register any such clear-cut decision as they gave in 1936. It is no sign of unintelligence or unfamiliarity with the nation's problems if citizens, even at this late date, are still uncertain as to which candidate might better serve the national welfare. We are passing through a crisis in world history in which forces and ideologies are at large which are no respecters of geography, no matter how distinguished by oceans or other barriers; we are fortunate and can be thankful that both candidates have recognized this reality and have disregarded advice of politicians who might have wanted to exploit the pulling power of the "We're-snug-in-our-little-nest" ostrich appeal. But though the "we or they" issue, to a large extent, has been removed from the area of argument, there are many other questions the thinking voter will attempt to answer for himself before he decides to vote for any candidate.

Perhaps these questions are Bismarckian imponderables, but at least their existence should be recognized and the attempt made to foresee, to the best of our ability, the possible consequences of their outcome. It is not the function of a literary review to editorialize on politics, but we beg leave to suggest what those questions or issues, which we hope reflect the non-partisan spirit in which they are written, might be:

1. What is the *real* danger of a third term? Is it not likely that far more important than whatever the President may or may not do during a third term is the attitude of the people who are voting against him because they sincerely believe that a third term would mean the end of our democracy? Look past the purely political arguments against a third term; look past the bleatings of those politicians who themselves are poor specimens of democracy in action but who will invoke all sorts of fears and dire predictions if in so doing they may aid their chances of victory; look past them all to those citizens who are honest in their conviction that a third term would result in the end of constitutional government as we have known it. Democratic government, like a monetary system, exists by confidence of the people. Destroy that confidence and you destroy the basis of that government. Will any considerable number of voters feel that as long as our democracy has died because of what they consider to be a disregard of the rules that they too can waive other rules which have set this nation apart from the totalitarian state? Even though there may *actually* be no danger in the third term per se, there may be danger in the attitudes or actions of those who believe this danger to exist. So that this question may be divided into two parts: first, whether any substantial number of citizens sincerely feel that we will have lost our identity as a democracy in the event of a third term victory; second, what the post-election attitudes of these citizens are likely to be.

2. To what extent may a change in

(*Continued on page* 11)

*Although Mr. Browder was not on the ballot in 1936, his name was listed as the preference of one writer.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Byron and Trelawny

SIR:—Perhaps, as Richard Aldington says [*SRL*, October 5], "there is really nothing to be gained by taking sides, at this late date, and manipulating evidence" in the controversy over Byron's attitude toward Shelley. But as a matter of fact, Byron's letter to Hoppner was a very lame attempt to appease a bad conscience, and Miss Armstrong was perfectly right in saying that Byron was "unutterably false to their friendship."

What happened was this. A former servant had carried to the Hoppners the most scurrilous tale about Shelley, namely, that he and Claire Clairmont had been lovers, and that they had had a child whom they had placed in a foundling hospital. In 1821 Shelley visited Byron in Ravenna and was told this story by him, though the Hoppners had made him promise that he would not tell it to Shelley. Shocked and horrified, Shelley wrote Mary, and she sent him immediately a letter indignantly denying and disproving the accusation. Byron asked Shelley to let him deliver the letter to the Hoppners, since he had broken his pledge of secrecy.

After Byron's death, Mary's letter was found among his effects, opened, but never sent to the Hoppners. Shelley had then been dead for two years. This explains Byron's disingenuous remark that Hoppner seemed to "have got some notion" against Shelley, and also justifies Miss Armstrong's (and incidentally Trelawny's) opinion of Byron as Shelley's friend.

MIRIAM ALLEN DEFORD.

San Francisco, Cal.

"What's Wrong with Authors?"

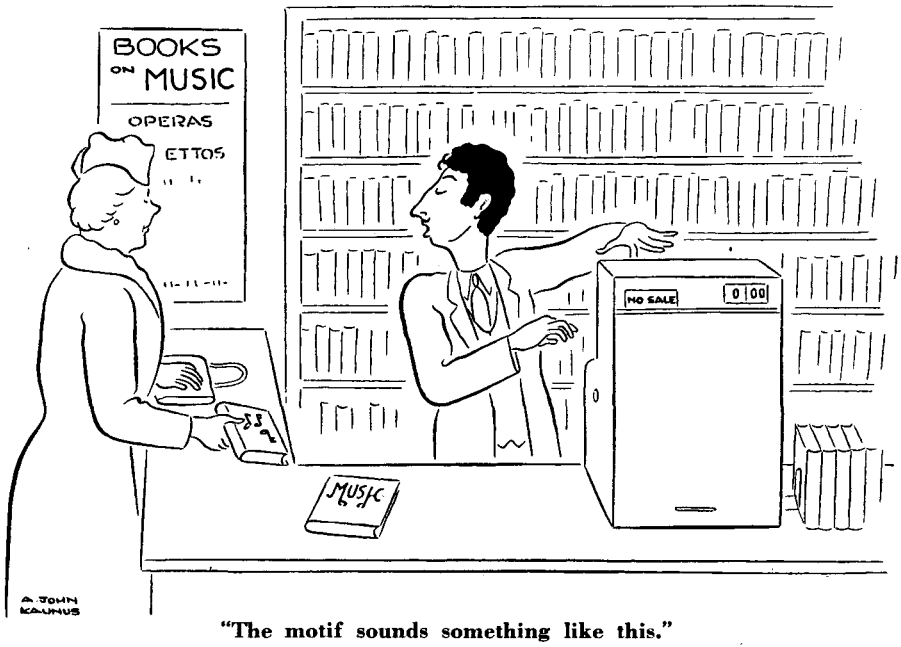
SIR:—Mr. Bennett Cerf's article "What's Wrong With Authors!" [*SRL*, Oct. 12] indicates what is wrong with publishers. Out of an article of about two thousand words fully three-quarters is a discussion of the financial relationships between the publisher and author. If business is the nature of the relationship, and money the basis of it, then he has no case against Hollywood, which only operates on the very same principle and gives the writer a better break. The trouble with Mr. Cerf is that he is entirely a business man, and as such can only argue from the ledger. On such a basis art is no issue, but commercial virtues, promptness, alacrity, a businesslike attitude, a clean job (his points A, B, C, D, E, F) are the only virtues in an author. In other words what Mr. Cerf would like is to deal only with business men. No wonder authors confuse him. For example, in his third paragraph he exhibits what he calls "one of the literary giants of the day" throwing a cup of coffee into a publisher's face. In the next to the last paragraph he blandly remarks (since as a business man he cannot even learn from his own experience, let alone from books) "The impossible demands and outbursts of temperament come from the men who have no business to be writers anyhow."

Finally, in illustrating how mean authors are to publishers he reveals that out of all the reputable publishing houses only two failed commercially during the latter thirties. Of course he insists it was the fault of the authors. All I can say is that here is a far better average than business generally shows for this same period, and I take it that speaks very well for authors.

Let me offer this argument; publishers publish only what they think will sell. What will "sell" is only written by market conscious writers. Market conscious writers are merely business men in lambs' clothing. Ergo, the publisher is hung by his own petard. The simple remedy in the book business is to cultivate the artist, develop so called "non-commercial" material. The result will benefit all concerned, and Hollywood will be out of the picture. Otherwise who cares about Metro-Goldwyn-Cerf?

I. J. ALEXANDER.

Brooklyn.



"The motif sounds something like this."

All Is Not Lost

SIR:—As a non-literary reader of your publication, I am harried by the fear that contemporary literature is as ill as the world it would portray; that it has descended to that most depressing of psychopathic pastimes—introspection. Your "Exiled Writers Issue" suggests the preponderance in the present scene of literary diagnosticians of social ills.

You have few prophets of hope; your writers wear glasses polarized by despair. I, for one, hope your enthusiastic welcome of these exiled writers, together with the sweet air of this free land, will insinuate a measure of hope into their minds and hearts. We want none of the horrors which are now visited upon their homelands; horrors which, so long contemplated, have come in spite of, if not because of, their mental spade work. Mere "viewing with alarm" weakens the resistance to disaster.

Your editorial welcome, from this viewpoint, leaves something to be desired. You say that America is economically overripe which, to my farm-trained mind in this apple season, is a tidy way of saying that America is rotten in this quarter and hopelessly destined for complete disintegration. I do not think America is rotten in any quarter—it is merely depressed just now with an overdose of introspection—but I respectfully submit that we must avoid a dangerous ripeness in the diagnostic quarter. What we need is less contemplation of the possibility of failure; not so much poison, but more food, for the spirit. If we are prevented from lifting our hearts, how can we lift our eyes and our ideals?

TANDY A. BRYSON.

Troy, N. Y.

Information, Please

SIR:—I am compiling material for definitive biographies of Marie Leveau, and Mother Catherine Seals. Inasmuch as the personal histories of both are relatively obscure, any information, or little known sources of information that can be supplied by readers will be deeply appreciated.

HELEN M. HYDOCK.

Ritten House
122 South 18th Street
Philadelphia, Penna.

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Land and the People

CORN BREAD AND CREEK WATER. The Landscape of Rural Poverty. By Charles Morrow Wilson. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1940. 293 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by RUSSELL LORD

CHARLES MORROW WILSON writes as a sort of country correspondent who covers the whole United States. This is his ninth book. All of them have been about Americans out from town. As becomes good country correspondence, his style and approach are quietly individual. He has his hates and crochets and does not seek in the manner of urban reporters to appear utterly objective and bloodless. It is easy to pick all sorts of little holes in the line of his argument as it advances. He seems even to argue with himself in places. But who does not, these days?

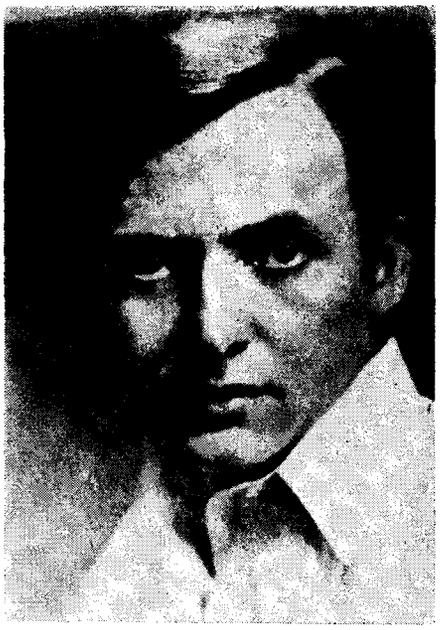
In his sweeping and excellent opening chapter on soil erosion, he could, I think, have made the extent of the ruin more believable by bearing down on the fact that the United States is not misty England but a land of violent climate. But I have never seen it anywhere else so clearly indicated that the violence and greed of our pioneer attack upon this land had a great deal to do with our present general estate —so much poor land, so many poor people.

"I have," Wilson testifies, "viewed bread lines, collapsing banks, dying industries, dying trades, waning towns, and once-great farming belts now gone hopelessly amuck. I have beheld and experienced niggardly privations; actual hunger in the very heart of the greatest food-raising regions of the country."

He tells of a widow with five children, on the road; and how, "late in November, 1936, the mother died of starvation—very near to the geographic center of this Land of Plenty." His panorama of non-urban poverty extends from the Atlantic Coast fisheries to the truck farms of the Southwest. He writes with heat and compassion, but under it all is a deeply stirring note of faith.

His faith is in the soil—not as a vast manufacturing plant, but as a place of refuge and abode. His hope is in the rural mind, and in new rural communities he sees developing about such governmental devices as the soil conservation districts. "The rural mind," he holds, "is possessed of a certain maturity of opinion, a result perhaps of its seasoning in actuality, of knowing life with a tremendous intimacy. . . ."

"Corn Bread and Creek Water" is



Charles Morrow Wilson is a country correspondent.

rich in intimate case histories of country people who were poor, but who lived good lives. For one, Molly Rush, who took in washing to raise twin sons, there in Wilson's native parts, the Ozarks:

> Molly aged somewhat before her time and died in her late fifties. During her working life the town had become equipped with . . . two steam laundries which paid deplorable wages . . .
>
> She earned all she got and more. Occasionally she was "snobbed" (and) an underground rash of scandal almost cost her membership in a local church. But Molly returned to the church, and she was buried by its ancient and benevolent pastor . . . A quartet from the church choir journeyed over muddy roads, stood in a lamplighted corner beyond the coffin and sang "Lead, Kindly Light." Out under the oak trees a smoke-blackened iron kettle and a stack of galvanized tubs waited . . . Trees nodded in the first spring wind. Wild cherries lifted their brave young leaves.

Mr. Wilson is our most gifted country correspondent with a national following. He has written another penetrating and moving book.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 344)

WILLIAM M. THACKERAY
*DE FINIBUS**

What an odd, pleasant, humorous, melancholy feeling it is to sit in the study alone and quiet, now all these people are gone who have been boarding and lodging with me for twenty months! . . . Is this making of people out of fancy, madness?

*(In "Roundabout Papers")

Author, Author!

WHEN Ernest Hemingway delivered the manuscript of "For Whom the Bell Tolls" to his publishers he intended to add a long section of several thousand words; in fact the first proofs carried a notation that more material was to come. The new section would not have changed the story, but Mr. Hemingway, apparently, planned to make explicit all the implications of the closing events. Much to the relief of early readers, who thought the present ending perfect, the author changed his mind and decided to let stand as it was written. . . .

Ward Greene, whose new novel, "Route 28," has just been published, finds time to do a prodigious amount of work in addition to his novel writing. An official of the King Features Syndicate, he puts in a day that might easily floor many writers. Not long ago he took time out to appear as a contestant on the "Take It or Leave It" radio quiz—and he won $64 answering questions on heroes. About every two years he produces a new novel. The last one, "Death in the Deep South," was made into a notable movie called 'They Shall Not Die." . . .

Walter Van Tilburg Clark, previously unknown as an author, is having the fun of watching his first novel, "The Ox-Bow Incident," find an immediate and enthusiastic audience. But he's still too new an author fully to understand the ways of publishers. Calling on Random House, he was puzzled when they told him that the sudden rush of orders following the first reviews had left the publishers temporarily out of copies of "The Ox-Bow Incident." He could only shake his head and tactfully tell Bennett Cerf the old story about "That's a hell of a way to run a railroad." . . .

Not long after the recent publication of her fifteenth novel, Christine Whiting Parmenter, who finds a devoted following for each new book, came across, in her attic, the manuscript of an unpublished novel. She had written it when she was twelve years old. On the outside of the package there was a note in her handwriting, "To be burned after my death." . . . James T. Farrell's new book, "Father and Son," came out the same day he became a father—of a son.

—EUGENE ARMFIELD.

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PRESIDENTIAL POLL

(*Continued from page 8*)

administration at this time be harmful? Will an interruption in the continuity of administration, particularly in foreign affairs, play into the hands of those who seek the defeat of democracy everywhere? Granted that the Republican candidate will make every effort in his power to hold fast our democracy against the totalitarian tide, will the loose ends and confusion which are inevitable with a change in administration serve the ends of the totalitarian bloc? As part of the question as to whether there may be advantages in a third term, let us also ask ourselves whether social gains accomplished under the New Deal will be continued and consolidated, or whether they will be stalled or scrapped. In such a case, would this constitute a retrogressive force which might weaken the faith of a considerable number of people in the ability of democracy to cope with their needs?

3. To what extent does the office of President of the United States demand a previous working knowledge of government? Is it a position which requires special public training or do the same rules which operate in private enterprise also operate in government? If this is the case, what are the rules and practices that have operated in the private enterprise of which the Republican candidate was formerly head? Are we fully acquainted with such rules and practices, and if so, would we like to see them applied to our government?

4. To what extent can the offices of the President of the United States be used, or have they been used, to insure the incumbent's re-election? Is it in keeping with democratic condition that the cards be stacked, if such is the case, in favor of any one party being returned to office.

5. At a time in world history when the policy of "divide and rule" has become the powerful lever of totalitarian forces, under which candidate are we most likely to have the greatest amount of unity for democratic good? Putting it another way, which candidate can command the greatest respect and confidence of the greatest number of people?

But though we presume to enumerate some of the questions of this campaign, we do not presume to know the answers. Meanwhile, on the eve of election, we take occasion to remind our readers of the words of James Greenleaf Whittier:

The crowning fact,
The kingliest act
Of freedom is the freeman's vote.

N. C.

"Creative Travel"

THE FIRE OX AND OTHER YEARS. By Suydam Cutting. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1940. 393 *pp., with index.* $5.

Reviewed by HASSOLDT DAVIS

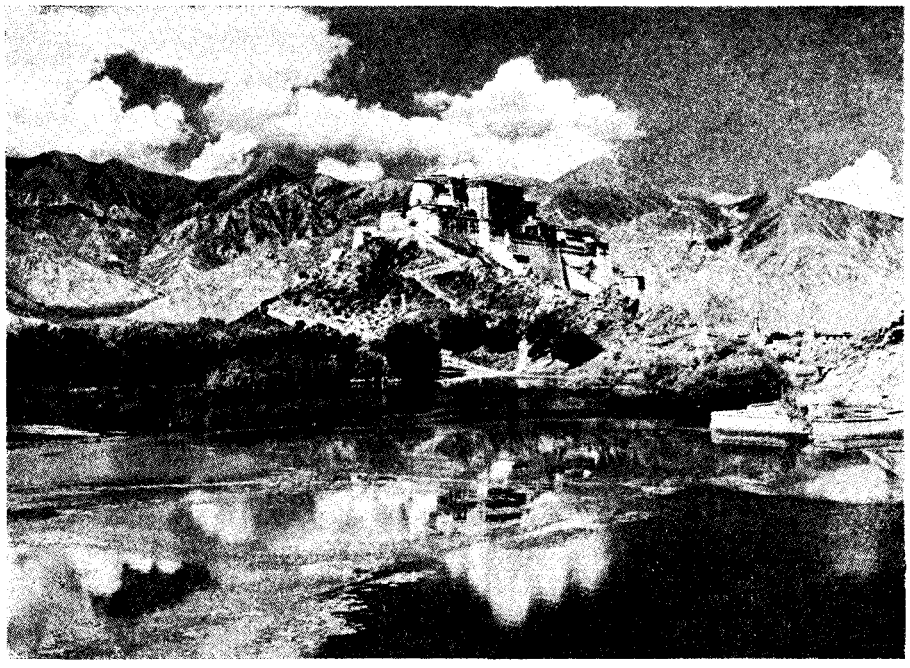
SUYDAM CUTTING states in the preface of this admirable book that during his many travels he has "never sought out a stable where a Ritz hotel was at hand," but even stables were scarce along the routes described here. This is a survey of his more important expeditions, illustrated superbly with 128 pages of his own photographs, three color reproductions of paintings, and three maps in color. As Mr. Cutting is an honest and intelligent traveler, with considerable museum work behind him, his book may be counted upon for information as well as sheer adventure of a sort rarely purveyed by the tourist-authors of today.

The 1925 expedition to Turkistan and the Tien Shan Mountains of Heaven by the highest caravan route in the world, over 18,000-foot passes, makes a stirring tale of scientific research. In quest of the Ovis Poli, the great wild sheep of Asia, he and Kermit and Theodore Roosevelt struggled across glaciers and agonizing terrain at altitudes where even the sturdy horses bled at the nose. His interest was ethnological when he went among the Assamese headhunters on a punitive expedition in 1927. In the midst of China he explored the strange kingdom of Muli, lived among the savagely independent Lolos, walked the streets of Tatsienlu that are paved with marble, and made such genial connections with hinterland lamas that some years later—notably in the Fire Ox Year, 1937, of Tibetan chronology—he was permitted to make two trips to Lhasa, a signal honor indeed.

His chapter on Nepal is superficial, possibly because that journey was more social than scientific; he and his wife were invited by the lone British minister to witness the twenty-fifth year Jubilee of the King's accession, an imposing ceremonial but far less important culturally than the least of the religious holidays. His description of the country is entirely physical; there is nothing of its customs nor its amazing history. As only one hundred and forty-nine white men have ever been invited to Nepal and as it still remains more tightly closed than Tibet, with the exception of Lhasa, it deserves comparable treatment in a work of this kind. During later expeditions Mr. Cutting found the pygmies of the Andaman Islands, the elusive anoa of the Celebes, the giant tortoises of the Galapagos.

The writing of the book is by no means sprightly, and the subject matter is of unequal interest—the chapter on Galapagos could be spared—but as a record of what the author terms "creative travel" it will be found a veritable encyclopedia of thoroughly adult adventure.

Hassoldt Davis's chronicle of the Davis-Roosevelt-Asiatic Expedition of which he was a member and which included a trip into Nepal, is about to appear under the title "Land of the Eye."



Lhasa, with the Potala in the background.

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Saul Bergman's Sons

SONS OF THE FATHERS. By Albert Halper. New York: Harper & Bros. 1940. 431 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by JAMES T. FARRELL

MR. HALPER'S new novel is a political novel, advancing the thesis of American isolationism. The purpose of the book is, in the author's own language, "to draw a life-like picture of an American family under the strain of war and to present an important character in American life, the immigrant parent who loves America—and understands Europe." Briefly, it is the story of two immigrants, Saul and Etta Bergman, and their American born children. Saul Bergman fled Czarist Russia in order to escape being conscripted into the Russian army. In Chicago, he became a grocer, and suffered from all the vicissitudes and recurrent periods of insecurity which is the lot of many small tradesmen. His children were growing up into decent persons when World War Number One broke out in Europe. He feared that his sons might be conscripted to go and fight in Europe's war. He voted for Woodrow Wilson because the latter was campaigning on the slogan: "He kept us out of war." When the United States did enter the war, two of his sons were eligible for the draft. One was called, but he enlisted: the other became a "draft-dodger." The oldest son, Milton, was killed in France shortly before the Armistice, and the book ends on November 11, when prayer services were held in the sorrowing Bergman household for the dead son.

In "Sons of the Fathers," one can observe three general conceptions which the author holds, and on the basis of which, he organizes and constructs his novel. These are: 1. America began as a revolt against European ways of life, and Europe is not worth the shedding of one drop of American blood. 2. *The people* are always right by instinct. 3. Time flies. The first idea does not progress beyond the level of a chauvinistic newspaper editorial or run-of-the-mill history text book. The second is a platitude, and in addition, by the people, Halper means concretely, the *petit bourgeosie*. The third idea is indisputable. Time does fly.

"There is five times as much palpitation of the heart in Albert Halper's books as there are in that of all the novels written by other members of his generation."

Eugene Friduss

I have read all of Albert Halper's books except "The Chute" which I am still reading as I write this review. In all of his books, I find the same careless and slipshod manner of writing. He is a writer without style. There is a difference between simplicity and carelessness in writing. For instance, the best writing of Ernest Hemingway possesses the merit of simplicity. Halper's writing, rather than simple, is hasty and sloppy. In his narratives, he never fails to corral every possible cliche within hailing distance. He lacks any concern with precision in the exploration and delineation of human emotions. Hence, he usually describes impulses and emotions as "something" which stirs, troubles, disturbs a character.

Here, "something" can be *anything*. Many situations of drama or tension usually produce, in the organism of his characters, a heart which is either "hammering" or "pounding." In fact, there is, I dare say, five times as much palpitation of the heart in Halper's books as there are in that of all the novels written by other members of Halper's generation who write in the same years as his. Halper's characters are stereotypes. He does not seem to think through the characters he creates; then, his conception of them is lamentably superficial. For instance, the major character in this novel is the father, Saul. Saul has escaped conscription into the Czar's army. There are many pages containing Saul's comments, fulminations, protests against the war, and his analyses and estimations of the meaning, purpose, and character of that same war. But rarely does he seem to include in all this, any protest about Czarist Russia. Even more than the Kaiser or England, such a man would obviously be against American entry into the war because of Czarist Russia. This simple observation seems to have escaped Mr. Halper in his conception of his major character. I cite it as an illustration of his carelessness.

Much of what Halper's characters say about the last war is true: I consider it to be true also of the present war. Politically, the book expresses a sentimental Americanism, and an equally sentimental isolationism. This reviewer has never been an interventionist. I criticize this book, politically, because it is confused and badly conceived. The political comment is naive. The handling of this comment violates the reality of the characters. In "Sons of the Fathers," Halper talks like a confused cracker barrel political philosopher. When he seeks to handle international political currents, he has more than obviously bitten off something that he cannot masticate and digest.

Albert Halper has one talent. He can tell a story about people whom he conventionalizes and stereotypes. From the point of view of story, his books are well constructed. However, his stories do not hold when one examines the characters closely and analyzes the constituent parts of his plots. For a writer who so ambitiously seeks to describe as much of American life as does Halper, he is singularly lacking in sufficient social information. Again and again, he is careless about details, about his time sequences, and about the sundry elements which must, of necessity, be assimilated if he is to become a novelist whose books are realistic recreations of life.

The best work of Albert Halper is not to be found in "Sons of the Fathers." I think that his most satisfactory characterization is that of the poet and cheap story magazine writer in "Union Square." His best book is "On the Shore," a volume of stories describing the same West Side Chicago world of small tradesmen as that of Saul Bergman. These stories were informed by a simplicity and feeling which is smothered in "Sons of the Fathers."

James T. Farrell is the author of a recently published novel whose title by curious coincidence is "Father and Son."

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. *The Devil and Daniel Webster,* by Stephen Vincent Benét.
2. *Night Club,* by Katharine Brush.
3. *Springtime à la Carte,* by O. Henry.
4. *The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg,* by Mark Twain.
5. *The Necklace,* by Guy de Maupassant.
6. *Markheim,* by Robert Louis Stevenson.
7. *On the Stairs,* by Arthur Morrison.
8. *Haircut,* by Ring W. Lardner.
9. *The Belled Buzzard,* by Irvin S. Cobb.
10. *The Monkey's Paw,* by W. W. Jacobs.

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Off the Canvas

ARTISTS SAY THE SILLIEST THINGS. By Guy Pène du Bois. New York: American Artists' Group Inc. Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc. 1940. 304 *pp., with index.* $3.75.

Reviewed by FRANK J. MATHER, JR.

IT would be hard to prove the title out of this book itself. Indeed it lacks the capriciousness of most autobiographies. Lucidity, reasonableness, and wit distinguish the narrative and the numerous and always relishable asides. Everything is highly mundane, in the good sense, a life-accepting book equally free from covert malice and overt enthusiasm. As a literary performance it is akin to the author's painting. It has high existence and must be reckoned with.

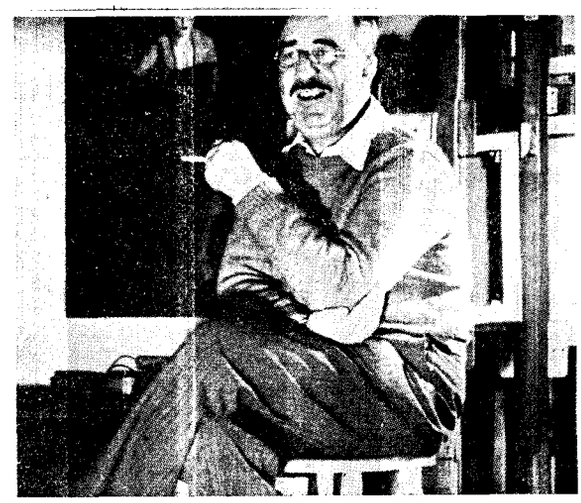
One naturally thinks of an autobiography in terms of pickings. The obviously good pickings in this book are the portraits. A host of recent Americans come alive—the Gargantuan Bob Chanler, the hideously obscene yet genial and highly talented George Luks, the big boy trying to be a genius, George Bellows, the illusive yet autocratic A. B. Davies, and many another. And Mr. Du Bois has a grace, which he shares with the late E. A. Robinson, in finding a kind of greatness in obscure and unsuccessful people. In this portraiture the sketch of the author's father is memorably precise and delicate. An incurable romantic, a sensitive Frenchman, dependent on the insensitive rich and on hack writing for the yellow press, a completely disillusioned person with a delightful residuum of tolerance and kindliness, an amateur with the tastes of a plutocrat, and the income of an upper clerk, such was that citizen of the world oddly misplaced in New York at the end of the century, Guy du Bois's father. Much of the solidity of Guy du Bois's accomplishment in painting and in art criticism, must rest on a complete sympathy with the paternal foibles and on a decision to avoid at all cost their repetition in his own career.

As usual in autobiographies the chapters on the author's childhood form a coherent and attractive whole. The theme has its tinge of tragedy, the resistance of an implacably French family to assimilation in the New York of Boss Croker, the somewhat painful trial and error by which a little French boy grew to be a New Yorker. All this is told exquisitely without the nostalgic tenderness usual in such evocations. It should remain a classic in this sort of writing.

In treating the goings-on of his friends Mr. Du Bois strains the usual bounds of discretion at times, but never those of good taste. Incidents which in other hands would be scabrous are properly informative and characteristic.

There is a wealth of comment on artistic matters, incidentally a singularly just and objective estimate of the author's own art. The running criticism of modernistic art seems to sum up to the judgment that we have to do not with a revolution but with an uncommonly widespread confusion. Towards the nationally advertised exploiters of the American scene Mr. Du Bois is jocosely skeptical. Anecdotes and savoury wise-cracks abound. Among the best of the latter is the observation of the financier James A. Stillman on leaving the Armory Show of 1919. "There is something wrong with the world," he said, "and these fellows know it."

In a quiet way this book is throughout colorful and witty. On the more serious side it expresses a resolute empirical endeavor quite free from illusion or malice. This habit of mind perhaps diminishes the amount of *Dichtung* usual in autobiographies, but it also greatly enhances the quota of *Warhheit*. It is a book which everyone who concerns himself with recent art in America must read and own.



(From the jacket of his book.)
Guy Pène du Bois

Frank J. Mather, Jr., formerly of the art department of Princeton University, was at one time art critic of the New York Evening Post *and assistant editor of* The Nation. *He is the author of "Estimates in Art."*

"For Normal Purposes"

MELANIE. By Gina Kaus. New York: Modern Age Books. 1940. 314 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by CHARLTON OGBURN, JR.

SOMEONE has said that a Frenchman eats every meal as if it were going to be his last. After reading too much current fiction, in which the author outdoes himself lest he neglect some feature of the economic struggle, the problem of minorities, adolescence, sex, childbirth, and death, the pioneering legacy, or the march of history in a small town, one is tempted to add that an American novelist writes as if the human race were never going to have another chance to express itself. By contrast, it is a pleasure to come upon a novel in the Continental tradition, like Gina Kaus's latest, in which the ingredients are selected with fine discrimination and a sure sense of what is relevant to the theme. The story is of a struggle between two personalities that begins innocuously, even ludicrously, and progressively enlists the total resources of both as it moves toward a pitiless and violent conclusion.

Albert is an unambitious young man chronically incapable of drawing a line, of taking a stand on anything, even in the matter of giving up his intolerable lodgings. The failing is partly the result of seeing other person's causes more clearly than his own, partly of temperamental laziness. To anyone who has suffered the throes of helpless indecision, his plight will be hideously comic. There is nothing comic about Melanie, however. The very antithesis of the other Melanie of contemporary fiction, she is a woman driven by a mad, jealous possessiveness and endowed with an unnatural strength of purpose by her inability to differentiate between what she desires and what is right. One would hardly suggest that these two embody the passive male and aggressive female principles in a common form; nevertheless, there is nothing implausible in them or in the hell toward which they are propelled by the force that drives Melanie to create, out of nothing, scenes of ever more destructive emotional intensity as a means of confirming her power and the fact of her existence. The end, precipitated when Albert finds another sort of love in an obscure stenographer, is so strong that it may be considered weak. Apart from this, Gina Kaus writes with a nice sense of proportion and a discernment that is humane even when sharpened with maliciousness. As a study in human relationship, "Melanie" is a piece of work pretty enough—in the words of Mrs. Webb—"for all normal purposes."

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WHAT'S WRONG WITH PUBLISHERS!

(*Continued from page* 4)

sale price, rather than on the retail price, of books. They are quick and rather convincing in showing the boob of an author "mathematically" just how the wholesale royalty rate is supposed to work out just about the same as the retail royalty rate; that it gives the publisher more leeway to advertise and promote the book, and that on sales of 50,000 copies, it works out to the author's advantage, which is not the case. Besides, it is not the already-successful author whose book is pretty certain to sell 50,000 copies who is offered a wholesale royalty contract; it is the new author, whose potential sales are estimated at somewhere between 2500 and 5000 copies in the regular trade, who is stuck with a wholesale royalty contract.

I have examined several royalty statements to authors who have signed wholesale royalty contracts and I have been astounded to discover that, in every instance, according to the royalty statement, the total number of copies sold was recorded as having all been sold at fifty per cent discount—none at a forty per cent discount, none at a thirty-three and a third discount, none to the slow-paying library trade at a discount of only twenty-five per cent. I don't accuse the publishers in these instances of having faked the figures; but I do accuse them of not having a proper regard for the author's interests in so readily and uniformly granting a fifty per cent discount to the retailers.

At the usual wholesale royalty rate of fifteen per cent on the first 2500 copies of a $2.50 book, where the discount is as high as fifty per cent, the royalty to the author on that number of copies is $458.75. At the usual retail royalty rate of ten per cent of the catalogue, or retail list price, on 2500 copies, on the other hand, the author (no matter what discount or discounts the publisher allows the bookseller) would get $625.

One thing which many authors never seem to realize is that, once having passed a given point of, say, 10,000 copies in sales, the return on a book, to the author, remains at a static fifteen per cent (usually) whereas the publisher's profit increases, on an ascending scale, with the sale of every 500 copies thereafter; for printing and other manufacturing costs decline with every printing of 500 copies or more after an edition of 10,000 copies has been exhausted.

That is why publishers are so anxious to win best-selling authors away from each other by offering the best-selling authors advances running from $5,000 to $25,000, a flat royalty rate running in some instances as high as 20 per cent of the retail price, and guaranteeing the author an initial advertising appropriation for his next book of anywhere from $5,000 to $15,000. Publishers uniformly deny that they ever try to steal an author away from another publisher, but I have yet to know of a successful publisher who has not been guilty of doing this at one time or another in his career.

The worst thing about this practice, for the generality of authors—that is, for the authors whose books sell 5000 copies, or under, until by lucky chance one of their books clicks and the author is thereupon lifted into the best-seller class—is that, in giving these large cash advances, and granting these flat twenty per cent royalty rates and large advertising guarantees to best-selling authors whom publishers want on their lists, the initial investment of the publisher in a book by this one author, is so great that he has to devote nearly his whole advertising and promotion budget to this one book, in order to sell enough copies to get his money back. So the publisher hasn't any time or money left to spend in advertising and promoting a book by some excellent newcomer on his list, whose work, with a little attention on the part of the publisher might easily be boosted into the best selling class.

Time and again, an excellent writer, whose work any one, with half an eye, could see would appeal to a wide and appreciative audience, is entirely neglected in the advertising and promotion budget of a publisher who is concentrating all his efforts on getting back the money he has spent in large cash advances and other bait used to swipe an author away from another publisher. Then, perhaps, one of the neglected author's books on his own list clicks mightily on its own account, through the high praise heaped upon it by reviewers and through word-of-mouth advertising.

Once having thus clicked, half a dozen other publishers are soon inviting the author to lunch, making "contacts" with him, telling the author about the advantages in being on their particular lists and offering whopping advances and other concessions.

The author listens to these terms and then takes a real, good look at the contract he got for his last book, with his present publisher. Perhaps he finds that, if the contract the inveigling publisher is offering is anything to go on, his original publisher has given him a thorough and complete trimming. . . . The author would be even a worse idiot than he was when he signed the first contract, if he didn't accept the inveigling publisher's offer as soon as he legally could.

Frequently the new, or all subsequent books, by the authors the publishers have spent so much money on in getting for their lists, are comparative flops, in spite of the tremendous guaranteed advertising appropriations. The publisher's delight in having the famous and popular author on his list is soured very considerably by news from the auditing department that the publisher has lost on the author he has been so anxious to get at anywhere from $15,000 to $35,000 and that he will have to sell a lot of reprints, "remainders," etc., before the book earns back the money originally paid out for it.

There are famous authors who are "in the red" on the publishers' books in varying amounts, running from $15,000 to $85,000.

The publishers say they keep these famous duds on their lists and keep shelling out big advances and fancy contracts to them for "prestige," to attract other authors to their lists.

What prestige is there in having an author (no matter how famous) on your list whose every book loses you $12,000, $15,000, $25,000 or $35,000?

All the prestige amounts to is a satisfaction of the publisher's personal vanity in his being able to call the famous author by his first name, talk to him for any or no reason at all by trans-Atlantic telephone at $150 a three-minute conversation (which is promptly charged to "office overhead" and included in the overhead charges allocated on a pro rata basis against the royalty earnings of the little fellow from whom the publisher has chiseled a Jesse James contract), and to bask in the author's reflected publicity. Prestige, my asthma!

Of course, all writers should belong to the Authors' League of America and should take advantage of every service the League offers its members; but there are a lot of authors, and good authors, too—potential best sellers—who never get enough money ahead to pay the league's small membership fee, until by some stroke of luck one of their books clicks in a big way, and then they don't particularly need the advice and counsel of the Authors' League.

And, of course, even authors ought

(*Continued on page* 16)

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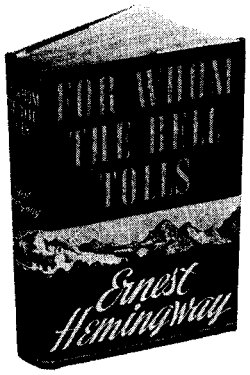

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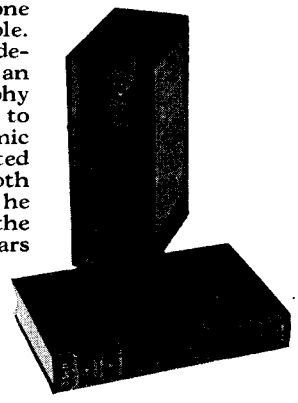

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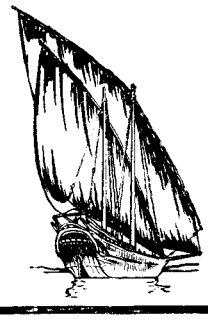

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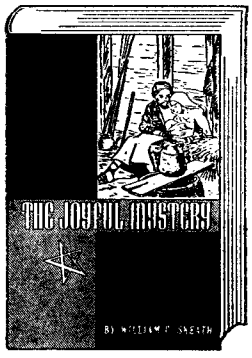

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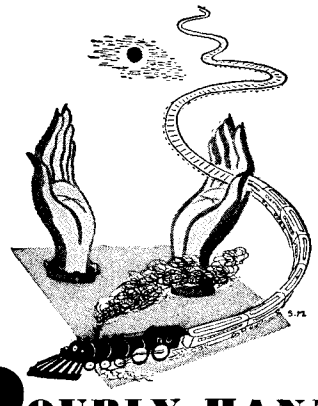

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(*Continued from page* 14)

to have enough sense to read a contract before signing it, and, having read it, even authors ought to have enough sense to tell when they have been given a royal gypping in a contract; but authors are creative workers; they are usually not trained to think in mercantile terms (most of them need guardians, as a matter of pure shameless fact) and because the creative act of writing is the paramount interest and concern in their lives, they not only have no bargaining talent but no sense about their own worth to the publishers.

It is for this reason that I say that, by and large, publishers aren't really good business men, or at least not as good as they think they are; and that is because they repeatedly neglect to nurture and develop the authors they have; they are often guilty of smothering, stifling and undernourishing their best properties while flinging about great wads of cash to, and to advertise, their "prestige" authors.

There may be, in fact, there are many things wrong with the book reviewing and book-page editing profession in America; but, bad or good, book reviewing is a necessary, correlative, factor in the success of almost any book and in the success of almost any publisher. Publishers do not hesitate to call upon book reviewers, particularly upon the well-established critics, to read manuscripts, proofsheets, and advance copies of their books, to give the publishers advance "quotes" to be used in advertising and promotion, and otherwise ask the critics to devote much of their time, energy, and talent to further the commercial ventures of the publishers (entirely aside from the reviewer's obligation to his readers and to his employer to give his readers the best service in literary criticism of which he is capable) and all entirely without any thought of payment to the critic, (which a critic could not accept, of course), or even a thank you.

But, let a conscientious critic or reviewer slap down, just once, as a dull, third-rate, disorganized piece of hack work, some book on which the publisher's sales manager has persuaded the publisher to lay out a large advertising appropriation, and often it is thumbs down on that critic, at least for a while.

I don't say that this, of which I am about to speak, is typical of publishers, because it is not. In fact, most of the publishers I know, and most of the editors and sub-editors, advertising men and sales managers who work for them, have far too much sense to do such a thing; but I know, personally, of at least six direct attempts by six different publishers to get me fired for writing an unfavorable review of one of the publisher's books.

In every case, my employer merely forwarded these letters on to me, without any comment, their silent but implied comment being, "Look what a cheap, underhanded, dumbcluck this bird turns out to be."

I have only begun to scratch the surface of the things that are wrong with the publishers. But more things are wrong with the system, as it works now, than with the publishers as individuals. With not more than six exceptions, I have been, and am, personally fond of every publisher I ever have known. I like them as fellow human beings; I recognize the limitations within which they must work in order to remain in business; I know that they are often beset by cranks and pests; that they are bedevilled by some authors who are imbeciles and double-crossing irresponsibles to boot; I know that, especially in depression times, many booksellers are extremely slow to pay, that it is difficult for a publisher always to guess right and make a fair profit (or even expenses) on all books he brings out; I know that critics and book editors are some times unfair, prejudiced, lacking in integrity, foresight and competence, and that they can do much to hurt the sale of some good books while doing much to help the sale of less worthy ones; I know that many good books get lost in the shuffile of the thousands of new titles which are brought out each year; I know that nearly all authors chronically complain that their books haven't been pushed enough, and that some authors have a widely exaggerated idea of their own worth and importance. I know, in sum, that a publisher's game is not all beer and skittles; and I know that most publishers, within their lights, are doing the best they know how, that they have generous impulses at times, that they would be altogether decent and honest citizens, probably, if they were in some other line of endeavor.

But I believe the publishers need to take stock of themselves; that they need to weed out as many malpractices in their game as they are aware of and can weed out; and that they should try more conscientiously to cooperate with intelligent and fair-minded authors, with the booksellers, and with critics and book editors in order to make book publishing less a haphazard gamble, in which petty chiseling and author-gypping will become unnecessary, so we can all be happier and more prosperous.

(Anything I have said above which may seem to reflect upon my good friend, Mr. Bennett Cerf, who is one of my publishers, or upon any other individual in the publishing business, is purely intentional.)

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Successful Parson

ONE FOOT IN HEAVEN. By Hartzell Spence. New York: Whittlesey House. 1940. 298 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by EDWIN DANIELS

THIS book will be compared with the popular "Forty Years a Country Preacher," and I fear will not bear too close a comparison. Sub-titled, "The Life of a Practical Parson," this informal biography, a son's tribute to his minister-father, leaves little to be desired in revealing the ability of one man to manoeuver in and out of various churches in the Middle and Far West.

His ability to secure the church which he had set his heart on, and then, sincerely, to interpret it as a "call," his proficiency in confronting the "unrighteous" with their "faults," and making them like it, reveal a surprisingly successful parson, but one who, in spite of a son's evident admiration, emerges as "wise as a serpent" but not exactly as "harmless as a dove."

"Everyone suspects the fine hand of Brother Spence in all this," writes one District Superintendent of him, in regard to his appointment to an important church, "but of course there is no proof." The son adds, "The suspicion was correct. Father had learned to nail down his appointments ahead of time." His expedient for getting the trustees to repair a flooded parsonage-basement (by having one of them "quite by accident" slip on the stairs and fall in the mud), his *finesse* in getting a new carpet for his study (by having a steward trip over an exposed surface), he called his "flank attacks." (One wonders why they were necessary.) Of them, his son says, "Father delighted in these little flanking movements, all of them successful."

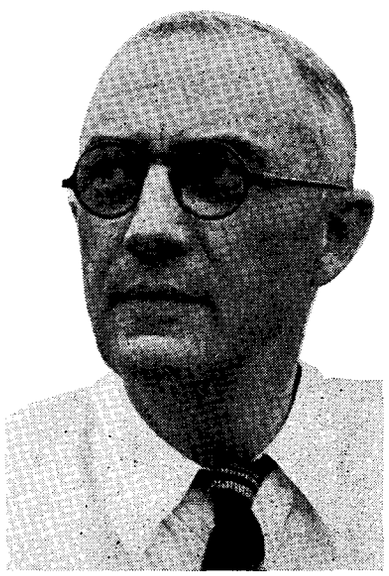
The period drawn is from the 1900's to the recent past, during which he packed churches with "popular" preaching. And whether it was conducting a revival, or getting a church built, or helping a young girl out of "trouble," or settling a ticklish choir-feud, one suspects more than half a note of admiration for astuteness on the part of the son for a man who had "One Foot in Heaven" and the other firmly planked on a very practical earth. I am sure that William H (without a period, since it stood for nothing) Spence's son intended this life-story as a tribute to a fine father, but in spite of many genuinely hilarious incidents, it misses something of the simple humanity of George Gilbert in "Forty Years a Country Preacher."

Edwin Daniels is minister of a church in a small upstate New York town.

NEW DIRECTIONS announces a new novel by one of our most distinguished literary craftsmen

In The Money

by WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS



Dr. Williams' new novel is a beautifully written story of the everyday life of plain Americans. Young Joe Stecher is struggling to found his own printing business in New York, to get "into the money" so that he can make a good home for his wife and children. His fight against unfair monopoly contrasts with quiet scenes of family life where we watch the personalities of his two little girls develop and unfold. *In The Money* is a sequel to Williams' earlier book *White Mule.* $2.50.

Other New Directions Books

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Judge's Shoptalk

A JUDGE COMES OF AGE. By John C. Knox. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1940. 353 *pp., including index.* **$3.**

Reviewed by JAMES REID PARKER

"IN view of the fact that many of the methods of procedure laid down by the law for the control of prosecutors and courts are intended primarily to insure the individual in the full enjoyment of his rights as a free citizen, it is sometimes surprising to me that so many of our people know so little of them or of the way they operate."

So says John C. Knox, Senior United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York, in his autobiography, indirectly giving us a plausible reason why this book and others in its general category should be read by the layman. It is clear that the average citizen has no intention of familiarizing himself with the rudiments of legal procedure. He dislikes—and one can't always censure him for this—reading a lease, a steamship passage contract, or even the formal wording of a new statute. Idly, perhaps, he reads a No Spitting regulation pasted against the window of a common carrier, or without enthusiasm he prepares to earn a driving license by studying the motor vehicle laws. But read the methods of procedure laid down for the control of prosecutors and courts? Not on his life. He might more easily be led to read Blackstone's "Commentaries." At least, he could ask for them at a public library.

Here, then, is one excellent reason for recommending such a book as Judge Knox's. It is, first of all, accessible. And it is considerably more interesting than a lease.

While John Knox is not a great man, nor even an exceptionally brilliant one, as he himself would modestly concede, he has led an interesting and useful life in the courts, and one that was worth chronicling. The reader may feel that his account of the prosecution of Harry Daugherty, former Attorney General of the United States, is incomplete, as indeed it is. There are those, too, who may wish for a fuller account of the Insull case. Judge Knox, to whose official attention certain phases of these litigations came, is in a position to write more definitively than he does. But his account of the work of the Irving Trust Company as receiver and trustee in the administration of bankrupt estates is admirably done. Here, and in his reviews of most of the major cases that came before him, save only the two already mentioned, one feels that his summation is inclusive and just. Now that the Chandler Act has changed bankruptcy practice, at least in a variety of aspects, the Irving Trust Company's method has become legal history. It is a good thing for the record to have Judge Knox's ably reasoned private opinion of the Irving Trust's work. The complete story of America's experience with the complex workings of receivership has not yet been written. When it is, this section of Judge Knox's book must necessarily form one of the sources.

Mr. Parker is the author of a series dealing with the law, currently appearing in The New Yorker.

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The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE TICKING HEART *D. B. Olsen* (Crime Club: $2.)	Scientifically minded and apprehensive youngster killed in gaseous Cal. cellar after warning Lieut. Mayhew who clears up deep-rooted case.	Sinister nocturnal activities of down-at-heel household satisfactorily investigated with conclusion that will surprise most readers.	So-so
NICE PEOPLE DON'T KILL *F. W. Bronson* (Farrar & Rinehart: $2.)	Much hated New Yorker has throat cut shortly after renting Conn. cottage. Second death and several attempts keep Sheriff Jones busy.	Quest for missing diamond, trailing of blackmailer, and search for pivotal volume of Keats add zip to lively and exciting opus.	Commendable
SING A SONG OF HOMICIDE *J. R. Langham* (Simon & Schuster: $2.)	Cal. city detective Abbott rags fellow officers, bluffs suspects, and adroitly rigs way to solution of deaths by land and sea.	Healthily hard-boiled and expertly contrived job, with breezy humor, action, brisk chatter, and an impudently likeable central figure.	Especially good
DEATH OF A PEER *Ngaio Marsh* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Murderous skewering in London lift of wealthy and irascible nobleman bestows title and burden of guilt on Micawberesque brother.	Inspector Alleyn has tough time with delightfully scatter-brained English family before unorthodox yarn reaches hair-raising finish.	Peerless
MURDER COMES BACK *H. Ashbrook* (Coward-McCann: $2.)	Merry widow of Manhattan plutocrat, her lawyer, maid, and lover all violently eliminated. Spike Tracy takes charge.	Wickedness of feelthy rich melodramatically exposed in tale that moves expeditiously enough but is decidedly not for seasoned solvers.	Commonplace
DEATH BY DYNAMITE *Joseph L. Bonney* (Carrick & Evans: $2.)	Scenting sinister deeds in family circle, Long Island chemical shark calls in Simon Rolfe who can't stop double killing, but solves it.	Rolfe's anti-Holmesian and pro-Montaigne campaign less pronounced than in earlier opus, plot trifle screwy but worked out with interest and finesse.	Diverting
MURDERER'S HOLIDAY *Donald Henderson Clarke* (Vanguard Press: $2.)	Talented but foot-loose son of ex-underworld potentate mixes it up with choice mob of thugs and killers, male and female.	Rollicking and Rabelaisian yarn of uninhibited ladies and gents, who shoot and succumb at drop of hat—and many do.	For the tough-minded
CRIME HOUND *Mary Semple Scott* (Scribners: $2.)	Realtor-aviator, and realtor erased in northern lake country. Vacationing 4th-Asst. D.A. sets out to show up local constabulary. Sheriff Mott pulls a sleeper.	Story is told through bumptious and juvenile D.A., making an otherwise good concoction difficult to take.	Optional reading

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For the Millions

THE STOIC AND EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHERS. Edited and with an introduction by Whitney J. Oates. New York: Random House, Inc. 1940. 627 *pp., with index.* $3.

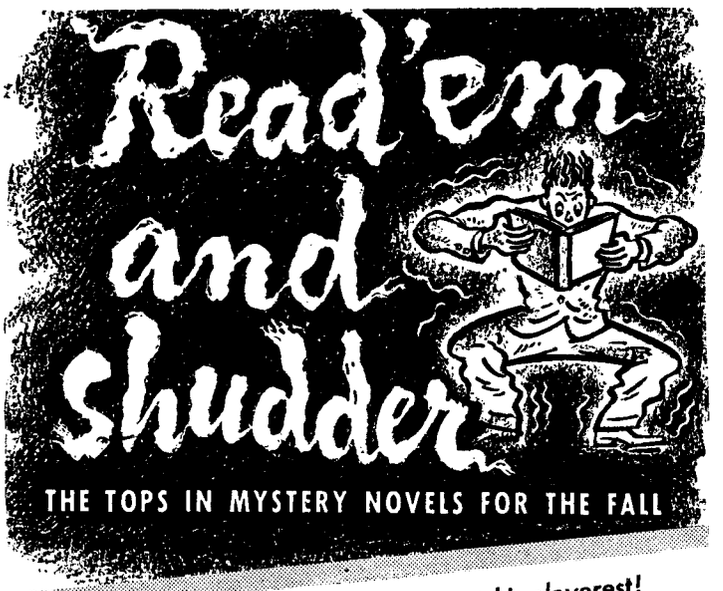
Reviewed by NATHAN C. SHARFMAN

THE possibility of understanding and enjoying philosophy rests, perhaps, not so much upon its being simplified for us as upon its being made available in a beautiful and compact form. In fact, simplification is usually over-simplification, and leaves us with nothing but phrases or isolated ideas that are annoying, because we don't quite know what to do with them, or what they mean. Much of philosophy should be not only for philosophers, any more than painting is only for painters, or music only for composers. In this volume we are given the complete extant writings of Epicurus, Epictetus, Lucretius, and Marcus Aurelius.

The general public, and even philosophers, have never had such a chance to hold in their hands all at once these treasures of Greek moral thought. "A book, like a person, has its fortunes with one; is lucky or unlucky in the precise moment of its falling in our way, and often, by some happy accident, counts with us for something more than its independent value." Precisely what better moment could there be than this to steep oneself in the cool and soothing tide of Stoic and Epicurean philosophies?

If you know Lucretius, you make a hasty and eager search for a passage that you remember. Or in random pleasure you discover something in the introduction that you had not yet read: "As it happens to thee in the amphitheatre and such places, that the continual sight of the same things and the uniformity make the spectacle wearisome, so it is in the whole life; for all things, above, below, are the same and form the same. How long, then?"

An excellent introduction provides an historical and analytical perspective for the two systems of thought. It explores the origins of Epicureanism and Stoicism in Socrates and Plato. A general and pertinent account of the philosophy of Plato is given. There is a summary of the philosophy of Lucretius, which can serve as an outline for the reading of "De Rerum Natura." Highlights on the life of Marcus Aurelius and apt suggestions concerning the manner in which the "Meditations" came to be written are helpful, and—as is not often the case—not too long-winded. Notes come conveniently and unobtrusively at the end of each book. There are also a glossary and index.



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THE NEW BOOKS

Biography

INK ON MY HANDS. By Clayton Rand. Carrick & Evans. 1940. 348 *pp.* $3.

In spite of the fact that he went from Mississippi to Harvard and reversed the Yankee process by peddling kitchen ware to New England housewives, Clayton Rand is the undoubted, blow-in-the-bottle, genuine Southern country editor. The ink got on his fingers as proprietor of the *Neshoba Democrat* almost by mistake, but it has stayed on long enough for him to have a good story to tell about his editorial adventures in rural Mississippi and maybe an even better story about the life in the rural Mississippi where he edited.

Country editors, Mr. Rand thinks, stay too much in their offices. He did not, and his book certainly does not, suffer from that fault. Indeed, while there is plenty to tell about the troubles in getting advertising and the troubles resulting from writing editorials, the best of his book is filled with what went on around his office in a wide range which includes pistol toters and privies, Choctaw Indians, Negroes and rednecks, Delta planters and the Ku Klux Klan, cattle ticks, cotton growers, merchants, and lynchers.

As editor, Mr. Rand has been doing the boosting job about roads and school and sanitation which is the country editor's job everywhere in America. But he has been no mere booster. He fought the Ku Klux Klan in rural Mississippi which was an altogether different business from fighting it in the metropolitan press. He even talked back to preachers which is something to think about in the hot Protestant village. Fortunately, he seems to have had a gift for friendship as well as fighting. Also, he has a gift for telling his own tale without seeming to blow—too loudly—his own horn. That gift is based, probably, in his sense of humor which enriches this book and is also the best editorial armor to wear in North and South, crossroads and metropolis. Maybe it is the priceless ingredient of editing in the country or anywhere else.

J. D.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT—A BIOGRAPHY. By Ruby Black. Duell, Sloan & Pearce. 1940. 331 *pp., with index.* $2.50.

For the benefit of all little girls who grew up with Elsie Dinsmore as an inspiration for girlish sweetness and goodness, Ruby Black has written an engaging sequel. It is called, "Eleanor Roosevelt—A Biography," but really it is the story of Elsie Dinsmore grown up to be the wife of a president.

As Elsie was the epitome of perfect adolescence, so Mrs. Roosevelt, according to Westbrook Pegler, one of her severest critics, is "the greatest American woman because there is no one who works as hard or knows the low-down truth about the people and the troubles in their hearts as well as she does."

Miss Black makes no attempt to characterize her heroine. She lets Mrs. Roosevelt's actions speak for themselves. And a woman of action she always has been, but it wasn't until she moved to Washington this last time that her abilities became known to the world at large, to the exasperation of thousands of women who believe that the place for The First Lady of the Land is in the White House.

The product of a beautiful mother who hated her daughter's homeliness, and a fun-loving father whom she adored, Eleanor Roosevelt was an orphan before she was ten. Her "flannels-from-November-to-April" and "short-dresses-for-young-girls-whatever-their-height" childhood with her Grandmother Hall made her sensitive and shy. But by sheer will-power and indifference to personal discomfort, she learned to live in a goldfish bowl and at least put on the appearance of liking it.

Mrs. Roosevelt insists on writing all her own columns, magazine articles, and books and, unlike many professionals, doesn't object to rewriting her material. She is proud of the fact that she has never missed a deadline since it was first published in 1935. Only a seasoned lecturer can appreciate Mrs. Roosevelt's speaking schedules. On one typical eighteen-day lecture tour, which Ruby Black outlined, she spent

> the first two nights on the train, then had six nights in hotels, followed by four nights on the train, then had six nights in hotels, and finally four nights on the train. She made trains at six o'clock in the morning, got off them by seven in the morning, and changed trains at such hours as two o'clock in the morning. She got on trains at midnight which were not to pull out until four o'clock in the morning. Part of the trip was made by automobile. She was in eighteen cities, including much shuttling back and forth through Chicago to make lectures in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, and Tennessee, from Fond du Lac to Memphis, from Kansas City to Orrville, Ohio. Of course she found time to visit NYA and WPA projects, and see the work of other federal and local agencies.

But Miss Black failed to mention that Mrs. Roosevelt also had to be charming to at least eighteen reception committees and give eighteen lectures in between times—no small feat under the best of circumstances.

For sheer endurance she has no equal, and unlike most humans who feel it is their divine right to be pampered once in a while, the author assures us that Mrs. Roosevelt has "never permitted her physical discomfort to keep her from doing what was expected of her." Instead of succumbing to the tortures of shaking hands with several thousands of people at one time, she has developed a technique for handshaking.

Her political ability, according to the author, is best described by her husband's onetime political advisor, Jim Farley, who asserted that: "She is the most practical woman I ever met in politics, with a genius for organization, the ability to get along with the men leaders which more definite and more demanding women sometimes lack, the determination to see the women occupy more than an ornamental role in politics."

Having been in almost daily contact with Mrs. Roosevelt for seven years,

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Miss Black is aptly qualified to write about Mrs. Roosevelt, which she does with sympathetic understanding, although she still seems overawed by her subject. F. W.

Fiction

ALL THE WORLD AND I. By Hepburn Dinwoodie. Little, Brown. 1940. 345 *pp.* $2.50.

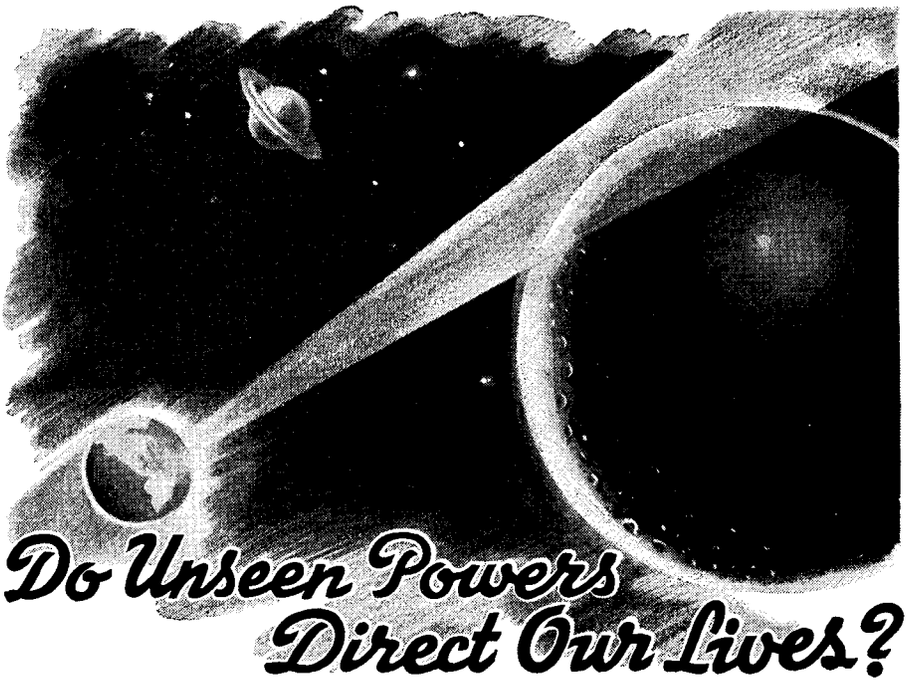
The Welsh who came to Labrador to fish, trap, and establish an outpost for the British Empire, are, in Miss Dinwoodie's tale, a hard-bitten and inarticulate lot. Once you have become accustomed to their queer linguistic inversions, their talk is revealed to center chiefly upon the material necessities of that bleak life: heat, clothing, the catch of the day, a little of love, which is something secreted deep down at the core of things, when everything else is done and out of the way. These people are interesting and well drawn, against their background of struggle with the frozen land and the waters. Less well developed is the plot of the book, which is a brief love story drawn out to a length beyond its values. The story of Alec Hardy and his Flora is a short story in content. It suffers by expansion. The expansion is not entirely lost, however, because the incidental background and detail are everywhere excellent. Miss Dinwoodie knows her Labrador and writes of it with great sensitiveness and freshness of vision.

N. L. R.

STRIPLING. By Youel B. Mirza. Wilfred Funk, Inc. 1940. 319 *pp.* $2.50.

Mr. Mirza's story of a Persian stripling is so simply and charmingly told that one may very easily overlook the book's chief distinction. More than charm and lyrical grace, it possesses the unique faculty of bringing to us intact the special qualities of an alien culture. The Persian way of life is one of those with which we are least acquainted; we know more about the Chinese, the Eskimos, the Samoans, than we do about the Persians. Mr. Mirza has not set down any laborious anthropological study, but along with his story of young Jalal he has given us an easy, running account of Persian manners and mores. Their life is evidently as pastoral now as it was two thousand years ago, as tribal in organization and patriarchal in authority. Jalal, the mighty young hunter, rises to the head of his tribe by virtue of his strength, cunning, and amorous zest. There is an ancient flavor to the story, due perhaps to the emotions that are lacking as much as to those that are present. Delight, passion, and piety are here, but not the self-consciousness or the rationalizing of modern times. Jalal hunts, fights, loves, has his concubines, leads his tribe, in response to a pattern as old as the Bible. In giving new life to this pattern Mr. Mirza has added some transcendent value to a lusty tale.

N. L. R.



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Double-Crostics: No. 345

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

	1-P	2-X	3-N	4-C		5-W	6-C	7-R	8-U	9-B		10-W	11-O	12-S	13-K
14-N		15-B	16-E	17-F	18-M	19-V		20-J	21-L	22-M		23-Q	24-G	25-C	26-W
27-N	28-I	29-V	30-K	31-B		32-A	33-V	34-I		35-A		36-I	37-J	38-V	39-Q
	40-M		41-W	42-E	43-T	44-S	45-G	46-M		47-L		48-P	49-B	50-H	51-N
52-O	53-S		54-L	55-J	56-M		57-A		58-T	59-X	60-R	61-D	62-F	63-W	
64-M		65-B	66-L	67-T	68-C	69-D		70-L	71-M	72-Y	73-F		74-X	75-I	76-R
77-H	78-E	79-J		80-Y	81-B	82-E		83-L	84-X	85-D	86-F	87-A		88-F	
89-T	90-B	91-P	92-Y	93-K	94-D	95-I	96-U	97-E		98-T	99-N	100-E	101-I		102-D
	103-N	104-H	105-W	106-U	107-G	108-L	109-O	110-C		111-G	112-N	113-X	114-C	115-M	
116-E	117-S	118-M		119-T	120-H	121-O	122-I		123-P	124-A	125-U	126-I	127-C		128-J
129-N	130-Q	131-R	132-B		133-S	134-A	135-M		136-I	137-L	138-T	139-G	140-K	141-X	142-V
	143-F		144-D	145-N	146-T	147-U	148-P	149-B		150-J	151-U		152-H	153-F	154-J
155-K	156-L	157-M	158-U	159-Y	160-E		161-A	162-K	163-J		164-X	165-A	166-V	167-B	168-S
	169-W	170-J	171-C	172-D	173-L	174-R		175-C	176-Q	177-L	178-P	179-E	180-U		

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 10 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. French operatic mezzo-soprano (1808-36).

B. Side-liner at a dance.

C. Rebellious; in opposition.

D. Picaresque novel by Le Sage.

E. Of the best quality (colloq.; comp.)

F. Old dance with high leaps, for two.

G. Satan (Arabian).

H. Reject with disdain.

I. Resist with force.

J. Consisting of names.

K. Mass of rough, irregular pieces.

L. One thing and another (3 wds.)

M. Having many aspects (comp.)

N. Up to that time.

O. Vandals.

P. Unfold.

Q. Consign to perdition.

R. The rear of (naut.)

S. Scottish river celebrated by Wordsworth.

T. Unyielding.

U. Pottering.

V. River internationalized by Versailles treaty (1919).

W. Stumbling block.

X. Survive.

Y. Outstanding German novelist (1875).

WORDS

32	35	87	124	161	165	57	134				
65	49	9	15	132	167	81	149	31	90		
175	4	25	171	6	110	68	114	127			
172	85	94	61	69	102	144					
97	16	42	82	100	116	160	179	78			
86	88	17	153	62	73	143					
45	139	107	24	111							
152	50	120	104	77							
36	95	75	126	136	122	28	34	101			
150	55	170	154	20	79	163	37	128			
13	162	140	93	30	155						
156	66	108	83	54	21	177	137	173	47	70	
157	118	135	46	40	71	18	64	22	115	56	
103	129	3	112	145	99	27	14	51			
11	52	109	121								
91	1	148	123	48	178						
39	130	23	176								
7	60	76	131	174							
168	133	53	117	12	44						
43	58	119	138	98	146	89	67				
151	158	180	147	106	8	96	125				
19	33	38	166	29	142						
105	5	41	26	169	10	63					
113	59	164	141	2	74	84					
92	72	80	159								

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TRADE WINDS

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Maria Sermolino by Candido Portinari

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART kindly allows Old Q. to print a small (and very inadequate) cut of a portrait which forms part of their exhibition of Portinari's paintings. The sitter was Miss Maria Sermolino, one of the editors of *Life,* to whose clearly focussing eye some of that magazine's most exciting portrayals of Modern Living are accredited. ☞Candido Portinari, born in 1903 on a coffee plantation in the interior of Brazil (his parents were immigrants from Italy), is one of Brazil's leading artists. His frescoes for the Ministry of Education in Rio, his murals in the Brazilian Pavilion at the N. Y. World's Fair, received international attention. ☞The most his parents were able to do to help his art education was to give him a 2nd class railway ticket to Rio when he was fifteen: after that he had to struggle to earn his own way. ☞His paintings of life on the Brazilian fazendas are probably the most distinguished artistic panorama that has been accorded the immortal and deific coffee bean.

★ ★

☞The admired London bookshop of C. A. Stonehill, Ltd., has closed its quarters in New Bond Street "for the duration of the present emergency," and opened a N. Y. branch at 25 East 54. ☞We were pleased to hear from our old friend Frank Henry that the first six months of business have been so lively for the young firm of Wilfred Funk, Inc., that they have already had to enlarge their offices at 386 Fourth Avenue. ☞Geoffrey Gomme reprints as a bonne bouche in catalogue No. 48 of Edgar Wells & Co. (602 Madison Ave., N.Y.C.) a portion of a delightful and characteristic essay by Hilaire Belloc *On the Selection of Books.* The lively Hilaire, who so well knows his own mind, objects to anyone else advising him what books to read, and hearily conspues all Lists of a Hundred Bests or whatever. This essay, written in 1930, is in the best Bellocian gusto, and prefaces a delightful catalogue. ☞*The Poetry of Dorothy Wordsworth,* edited by Hyman Eigerman, is a very pleasing experiment (Columbia Univ. Press). Mr. Eigerman has taken passages of poetic prose from the famous Journals of D. W. and printed them—without changing words or word-order—as free verse. This emphasizes what all good critics have always remarked, that Dorothy is not to be thought of merely as a supplier of footnotes for old William, but as a delicious and subtle poet in her own right. ☞A fine and candid new poem by T. S. Eliot, *East Coker,* which may not have been noticed by many readers in the *Partisan Review* last summer, has strong things to say about the problem of trying to say what one feels (which is preceded of course by the attempt to find out, what does one really feel?). ☞Eliot says:—

". . . each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate,
With shabby equipment always deteriorating
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
Undisciplined squads of emotion."

★ ★

☞Another good piece of promotion is the postcard from Frank Frazier (Lippincott) showing a dustbowl farmer looking at his ruined fields, where even the birds starved. This in behalf of *The Ghostland* by Fred Rothermell. ☞Wright Howes, bookseller, has moved to 100 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, and issues an interesting list of Americana. We like the little poems Mr. Howes works into his printed-like-prose announcements, in the manner of J. R. Lowell. For instance: "The undersigned mentions, with deepest regret, no discounts are granted, all prices are net; but thanks to prevailing cheap parcel post rates, he will mail all books free in the United States. All undescribed items, let it be understood, are in publisher's cloth and condition called Good." ☞Minna Breuer of the Cincinnati Public Library says she keeps a private file of author-title coincidences. It includes L. P. De Gouy: *Ice Cream Desserts;* Kathleen Barker: *Nothing But Dogs;* Wilbur F. Crook: *Do You Want to Become a Banker?,* and Walter C. Reckless: *Criminal Behavior.* *Life* magazine urges us to renew "in the slack season, before our subscription girls in Chicago get caught in the Fall rush." ☞What will they wear then?

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